

VZCZCXYZ0007
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSB #0405 1281129
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 071129Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2871
RUEHPNH/NVC PORTSMOUTH 0140

UNCLAS HARARE 000405

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR CA/FPP
DEPT PLEASE PASS TO KCC

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [CVIS](#) [KFRD](#) [CPAS](#) [CMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: 2008 QUARTERLY FRAUD SUMMARY - QUARTER 1

REF: HARARE 000118

a. COUNTRY CONDITIONS: All four of Embassy Harare's Fraud Summary reports for 2007 reported that conditions in Zimbabwe had hit an all-time low. The downward spiral continues with the added stress of the March 29 presidential and parliamentary elections, the results of which have only recently been announced and are widely-believed to have been rigged. Currency shortages continue as year-on-year inflation tops 500,000 percent. Basic commodities have been sporadically available in grocery stores but at prices that are exorbitant for an average Zimbabwean. Should President Mugabe retain power, we would expect to see an increase in visa applications, both valid and fraudulent. Even if the opposition party leader becomes president, Zimbabwe has a long road to recovery and fraud will continue to be pervasive. END SUMMARY.

b. NIV FRAUD: NIV fraud has been minimal this quarter. The fraud prevention unit (FPU) confirmed two instances of passport fraud relating to NIV applications. Locally employed staff (LES) detected irregularities in the passports, which the Registrar General's office confirmed as fraudulent. Both cases were shared with the regional security office (RSO) who is liaising with Zimbabwean Republic Police (ZRP) in ongoing investigations.

c. IV FRAUD: Post has investigated a handful of Immigrant Visa (IV) fraud cases this quarter. Qualifying relationships continue to be the issue of primary concern. In each case, the petitioner claims to be married to a Zimbabwean citizen but the "couples" have never cohabitated and are unable to successfully pass separate telephone interviews about their purported spouse. Revocation memos have been sent in each case. Our current SOP has been amended to mandate a fraud investigation for all step-child petition cases as this particular visa category has a very high rate of fraud.

d. DV FRAUD: Instances of DV fraud are rare in Harare but occasionally we encounter instances of questionable "pop-up" dependents, or dependents added after the primary applicant wins the lottery.

e. ACS AND PASSPORT FRAUD: Post has seen no significant passport or ACS fraud this quarter.

f. ADOPTION FRAUD: As inter-country adoption is rare in Zimbabwe, post has only processed one adoption during the quarter. Fraud was not suspected.

g. ASYLUM AND OTHER DHS BENEFITS FRAUD: As stated in last quarter's fraud summary, political and economic conditions in Zimbabwe continue to create the perfect scenario for asylum fraud. Given that presidential elections were held this quarter and that Mugabe's tyrannical rule has been in the international spotlight, there is

every reason to believe Zimbabwean asylum applications may increase in the coming months. Post continues to verify police reports, death certificates and opposition party incident reports and membership records for pending asylum hearings as requested by DRL. While opposition party documents are generally found to be valid,

other supporting documentation is almost always fraudulent. A major issue is that the main opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) is forced to often rely on sketchy records or memories rather than comprehensive membership rolls in document verification as their offices have been repeatedly ransacked by the ruling ZANU-PF party and virtually all their records have been destroyed or lost. Post will continue to do everything in its power to verify documents as requested by DHS. Post issued forty I-730 cases in 2007 and currently has 110 Visas 92 cases pending.

h. COOPERATION WITH HOST GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES: In spite of the contentious nature of relations between the Zimbabwean and U.S. governments, working level contacts continue to be more than willing to assist Embassy representatives (Consular, RSO, Political) with verifying documents for fraud investigations. During Consular Leadership month the Consular Section hosted a consular open house for 30 working contacts from host government offices, local schools and travel agents. The turnout was excellent; the event was well-received and has contributed to better partnerships with our interlocutors.

i. STAFFING AND TRAINING: Embassy Harare experienced a significant loss this quarter when our Administrative Assistant of two years, Joana Shumba, passed away unexpectedly in January. The consular team has done its best to fill in where needed and a new Administrative Assistant will begin work on May 12. As her position is also responsible for assisting with NIV data entry and document intake, post will assist her through our local FPU training module and will seek out regional and international training opportunities as appropriate.

MCCEE